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ABSTRACT

This booklet is intended to help individuals teaching in extension programs select teaching methods that are appropriate to the subject of their particular course, the number of students enrolled in the course, its time and duration, and the place in which it is being held. The first chapter discusses the importance of making a conscious choice of teaching methods and combining several methods in any given course. The second chapter explains the differences between expository, discovery, participatory, and evaluative teaching methods. The next four chapters cover each of these techniques in greater detail. Expository methods are discussed from the standpoint of lecture techniques and the use of blackboards, overhead projectors, teaching aids (audio and visual), and demonstrations. The chapter on exploratory methods includes guidelines for using various discovery methods (reading, projects, case studies, surveys, visits) and experimental methods (practice, trial and error, problem solving, group learning activities). Various participatory methods, including group discussion, debate, subgroups, buzz groups, snowball sessions, introductions, peer teachers, role plays, simulations, and dramas are discussed next. The chapter on teaching methods in evaluation covers questions, tests, quizzes, exercises, and self-assessment. The importance of adequate planning and preparation are discussed in the final chapter. (MN)

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TEACHING METHODS IN EXTENSION

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TEACHING METHODS IN EXTENSION

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Illustrations by Peter Henley and Margaret Melicharova
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FOREWORD

This booklet has been written to help you in your teaching of adults, whether you are an extension worker or instructor in agriculture or health and nutrition or mother and child care or community health or in integrated rural development, or teaching literacy or family planning or workers' education or courses for women or income-generating/vocational programmes or technical subjects in continuing education or some other form of education or training for adults.

For teaching adults is different in many ways from teaching children or college students. If you try to teach adults like children, you will usually have little effect and you will sometimes provoke opposition. If you teach them as adults, your work will become more effective and more permanent.

This booklet is part of a series concerned with thinking about what is so different about teaching adults. It deals with the methods of teaching we adopt - that is, the things we do as teachers and the things we ask those who are in our classes to do as learners (we shall call these persons student/learners). It is primarily concerned with teaching with groups of adults, but some of its contents may be useful also in one-to-one teaching. And some teachers may find some of what it has to say relevant to teaching younger age groups as well. Some of the methods discussed can be used with illiterate groups but others will only apply to literate student/learners.

We have left a good deal of space on each page for you to make your own notes and to add further points as your experience of teaching adults grows. We hope that you will find this booklet useful.

Education for Development
1987

It is important that you make the material contained in this booklet relevant to your course. So write down here:

* the subject of your course

* the number of student/learners

* the time and duration of your course

* the place your course is held at

CHAPTER 1

CHOOSING A METHOD

It is not always realised that there are many different ways of teaching. We tend to use one method alone and to imagine that that is the only way to teach. But we need to remember two things:

a) that we should choose a method consciously because we think it is the best way for our student/learners to learn this particular subject.

b) that we should use more than one method in any class - it is best to teach the same topic in more than one way. If we do this, the learners will remain interested. What is more, if they do not learn by one method, they may well learn by another method. The adults that we teach all have their own ways of learning things which may be different from our way - so we should try to get them to learn by using several different methods. Teach your topic first using one method, and then repeat the material using another method.

If we are to choose a method or more than one method when we teach, this means that we must prepare our lessons. Most of our work as teachers in extension is done outside of the classroom, even before we meet the learners. A lesson of 30 minutes will normally take at least one hour to prepare. If we say we are too busy to spend that long on preparing our lessons, we are too busy to teach! On the other hand, some lessons once prepared can be used again, provided we go over it again, preparing it thoroughly and adapting it to the new class - and that may mean choosing new methods to teach the same subject, since this is a different set of adult student/learners and their needs and abilities are different from the last set.

When we prepare our lessons, we tend to think more of content, what we are going to teach, than of methods, how we are going to teach. But the methods we choose will determine whether our teaching will be effective - that is, whether the learners will learn or not. There is no point in teaching anything if the learners do not learn! And it is the use of good teaching methods that will most help the learners to learn.

When we prepare our lessons and think of methods, we usually think of what we as teachers shall do. But we ought to think of what they, the learners, are doing. If we talk, they are passive, listening; if we demonstrate, they are passive, watching. We now know that the learners will only learn when they are active, doing something. So get them working - talking, practising, writing, reading, asking and answering questions or discussing as quickly as you can.

And change the activities. Do not ask them to listen for 20 minutes. Break up the time into different activities - in this way, your student/learners will remain involved in the work of the class. And it is the choice of these different activities which will be the main concern of your preparation for your lesson.

When you decide to try out a new method, do not be discouraged if it does not seem to work fully the first time. Try to think why it did not work and how you could do it better; then try it again. Some methods need practice to get them to work.

And combine different methods, if you can. Discussion and handouts can be used together, for example. After a time you will begin to see when you should be active and when they should be active.

There is a final point we need to make before we begin to discuss the methods themselves. We tend to think too much of teaching methods. The result is that we think that learning only takes place in class, when we are teaching. But learning can take place when e are not present - indeed, the best form of extension teaching is one when the learners are learning on their own. If we think of learning methods instead of teaching methods, we will be able to choose methods which the learners will be able to continue to use between classes, out of class, when we are not present. And they will become independent learners.

We have set out here some of the more common methods so that you can choose which ones you will use this time. We cannot of course list them all. So add others to this list. Write your own notes against each method - when you tried it and on what subject and whether it worked or not. Make this book your book; it is not our book but (like a pen) a tool for you to use in your own way.

CHAPTER 2

THE RANGE OF METHODS

There are four main groups of methods of teaching and learning.

GROUP 1: Expository methods. These are methods when the teacher tells the learners something or shows them something. They consist of presentation - the teacher presents something to the learners. On the whole the learners remain inactive, passive - they watch or listen.

These instructional methods are the most commonly used methods, for several reasons:

a) because we were taught that way, it seems most natural to us as teachers.

b) because we are concerned about the subject matter of what we are teaching (nutrition or literacy or agriculture or health etc), and we want our learners to know this material.

c) because we think more of teaching than of learning, of what we shall do in classs than of what they shall do.

d) because we think the learners need us, that they cannot find out things by themselves; that we need to impart knowledge to them, because we possess knowledge and they do not; because it shows us as the 'expert' (and we like that) and the learners as 'ignorant' (and we like that too).

Now, it is true that the learners need to acquire new knowledge, that they need to come to see that there are other ways of doing something, other ways of looking at things. But we too need to come to see that there are other ways of doing something (i.e. teaching), that the learners can come to acquire new knowledge in other ways than just by listening to or watching us. If we do not encourage our student/learners to work on their own, we will not be able to build up their confidence; and without confidence, they will not learn.

GROUP 2: Discovery methods. In these the learners find out by themselves the new knowledge and understandings they need; they discover new ways of doing things, they develop skills of their own. The learners, watched carefully by the instructor, are active in their own learning. They offer their work to the teacher for evaluation. they try things out, cautiously at first and then with growing confidence. Such methods will enable the learners to become independent, to continue their learning out of class and eventually to continue learning on their own when the class is over.

The role of the teacher here is different. We may set the task to be done, direct the discovery process. We will need to assess it - not in a negative sense ("this is wrong") but in a positive sense ("this is a good effort but now let's see if we can do/make it better" etc). Our job is to encourage the student/learners, to help them to learn, not to correct them and make them feel that they are failures. We must build up their confidence, not destroy it.

GROUP 3: Participatory methods. We normally teach in extension with groups of student/learners; and sometimes these groups do things together to help on their learning. We call these methods 'participatory'. The learners share their knowledge and experience and views. They work together to do something as a joint enterprise; they become a learning co-operative!

Our role as teachers is once again different. Sometimes we may set the task. But more normally we will join the group as a member; we will share our knowledge and experience and views on an equal level with theirs. At the end of the exercise, we may wish to go over to an expository style, where we (or someone in the group) summarises what they have come to know, to draw it all together, to make a coherent picture out of it all and to relate it to other parts of the subject. But the main activity will be the group sharing and working together.

GROUP 4: Evaluative methods: At times we will want to test whether the learners have really learned what we are teaching, how well they have learned it and what they can do with it. Such tests can themselves become methods of new learning. The student/ learners will often come to see new relationships or they will come to understand things more fully as they try to use their new knowledge or skills.

Our role as teachers here is one of reinforcement and encouragement. Once again, we should not 'correct' things in a direct fashion but try to show that an answer is not complete or that there are other ways of looking at things. A piece of sewing in a craft (income-generating) programme may not be very good, but it will be an achievement for the learner and we must recognise it as that. Our task is not to say that it is bad, because that will deter the learner from trying again. Our task is to help the learner to do it better next time - that is, to build on what they have done, not reject it and start all over again. In the end we want the learners to assess their own work: so start off by asking them, "How do you feel about this?" Encourage them to make their own judgement. They will be hesitant to tell you but help them until they will confide in you; then they will tell you truly what they think about their own work - and about yours!

Can we list some of the methods we last used in class under the following heads:

expository methods:

discovery methods:

participatory methods:

evaluative methods:

• • • • • •

There are then four different sets of methods - expository, discovery, participatory, evaluative. How should we choose between them?

1. We need to vary our methods, to use more than one method in any lesson, to teach the same thing using different methods.

2. We need to make sure that the learners are active, not passive; to ask ourselves, "what are the learners doing?"; not to talk too much ourselves.

3. We need to build up the confidence of the learners until they feel they <u>can</u> do something. Only then will they <u>want</u> to do something.

Sometimes we will want to start with expository (instruction) methods, move to discovery or participatory, and then end each class with evaluative methods. But there is no need to follow this sequence every time. We can start with discovery or a group participation exercise; and we can hold our exposition back until the end of the class. There is no one right way: we must choose what suits us best.

Our greatest problem lies with ourselves. Many of us as teachers do not believe that our student/learners <u>can</u> do these things for themselves, we feel that they <u>need</u> us to teach them. It is we who have to learn new attitudes. This booklet is designed to encourage us to experiment with new methods and to see that some of them will work, even with our student/learners.

CHAPTER 3

EXPOSITORY METHODS

The two main forms of expository methods are the lecture/talk and the demonstration. Both present new material from the teacher to the learner.

I The lecture:

The talk or lecture method is the most common form of teaching method we use. This is largely because it is easy, because we have been taught that way, because the learners expect it, and because we feel good about it, it makes us feel that we have covered the ground.

The lecture is very useful. We can present our material to our learners in the way we want to do it. But it needs careful preparation:

a) Do not make it too long: listening to a lecture and remembering all the material in it is a difficult task, calling upon advanced skills. Our student/learners are not used to doing it for long periods, so they will find it difficult to concentrate for long periods. Keep it brief. And make sure everyone can hear you: some teachers do not bother to do this!

b) Construct the subject matter carefully: the listeners need clear signposts of where they are in the lecture. A talk with three points is easier to listen to, to understand and to remember than one with 20 points. Do not put too much in, and pick out the most important things you want to impress on the learners. Never say to the listeners "I don't expect you to remember all of this ...", because this will put them off, and if you don't expect them to remember it, why waste their time telling them it? But do stress the most important points.

It may be a good idea to follow a pattern like this:

1. Introduction (very brief): "Tonight I am going to talk about ... and I want you to be able to remember at the end just three (or four) main points: a) .....
b) .....
c) .....
[d) .....]
2. Lecture/talk ....
3. Summary: "Now, this evening I have talked about ....., and the main points I want you to remember are a).... b).... c)... [d)...]" Then you can test (see Evaluative methods below).

c) Break up the lecture: stop every now and again to see if they are following what you are saying, if they understand and agree with you. Sometimes something you say will cause a question to arise in the minds of your listeners; if you don't stop, half of their mind will be concentrating on trying to remember the question and half on listening to what you are now saying - and you have lost your audience.

When you ask if they understand, wait for questions to come - it often takes time for a student/learner to build up confidence to ask a question of a lecturer who is clearly an 'expert', and even more time for a student/learner to disagree!

Remember three important things about the lecture:
a) the learners are passive, not active - so they won't learn very much.
b) the listeners can't go back over it again as they can when they read a textbook like this; if they miss it when you speak they have missed it for ever.
c) it relies on memory which in adults is weaker than in children. So most of what you say will be forgotten in six hours.

So pick out the three or four main things you want them to remember and emphasise these time and again.

Can you list the three or four most important points from the last talk you gave to your class?

Use of blackboard:

The use of a blackboard ('chalk and talk') or something similar is very common in extension. The teacher can use the blackboard in two main ways to help with the talk:

a) to put up little diagrams which show the relationship of one thing to another. Example: "There are three main groups of foods - energy foods, growth foods and protective foods ..."
The learners will remember the diagram, not what you say!

b) to put up technical or difficult terms you may use in your talk. Example: "When dealing with fertilisers, make sure you have enough nitrogen ..."

Make sure everyone can see the blackboard the whole time; don't block it by standing between it and the student/learners, even when writing on it; let them see you writing.

Always try to keep your blackboard neat: an untidy blackboard may show an untidy mind, and the learners will learn more from a neat blackboard than from a messy one - they will be able to 'see' it more clearly in their mind's eye and thus remember it more easily. Try not to make a spelling error - for this will make some of the learners think you do not know your subject and they may lose confidence in you.

You can get some of the student/learners to write on the blackboard for you; don't do everything yourself but get the learners to do things for you and for the group.

Handouts:

With some talks and with some adult groups, you can help the learners to follow what you re saying by giving them a hand-out. These may take time to prepare and you may not have the resources to produce enough copies, but try it sometime.

There are several different kinds of handout:

a) the full text of your talk: this is not a good thing in most circumstances, as the listener will often be reading it to see where you change your mind or where what you say is different from what you have written down. In any case it is a waste of time: your student/learners can read it in their own time like a book, not in class.

b) a summary of the lecture in note form: this has lots of advantages. The learners do not need to take notes for themselves at the same time as listening to you; and secondly, you can be sure that the notes they have at the end of the talk are 'right' (studies show that more than 80% of all notes taken by students during lectures or talks are incorrect, usually seriously wrong, or incomplete).

This summary can be given out either

(i) at the start of the talk: the listeners can then follow your talk.

(ii) at the end of the talk: but studies suggest that most of them will not be read ever again. One effective way is to give out the summary near the end and to go over the main points of the talk again while they look at the summary.

c) summary blanks: you can put down the main headings of your talk and leave lots of space for the listeners to write their own notes under each space while you are talking. Do this carefully: before your class, go through the lecture and try to decide how much space to leave on each point. You may have to do it several times before you get it right. And make sure that you keep to the points on your paper and that the listeners know which point you have reached.

* * * * *

You can combine several of these methods: for example

lecture+blackboard+summary-blanks (which includes note-taking)

The overhead projector:

This is a useful new tool, like a blackboard, but it will not always be available for extension work. You can write on it like a blackboard and you can keep facing the learners while you are doing it, unlike using the blackboard; or you can prepare your transparencies in advance and build up a diagram bit by bit. There is a great deal of value in this, as you may want to start with a simple diagram and make it more complex later. To start with a visual aid which has everything on it may put the learner off with its difficulty to understand all the parts of it, and in any case it will be a distraction.

The older epidiascope is no longer generally available, nor is it of much use now. But some of us may still have to use it for our classes.

Make a list here for your own reference of the most important items of equipment available to you:

Using teaching aids:

You can use teaching aids of various sorts:

Visual aids: obtain or prepare diagrams, charts, pictures etc and pin them up and use them as you would use the blackboard. Make sure they are large enough for those at the back to see - walk to the back of the room and see if you can see it for yourself. Use colours as much as possible, not just for interest but to mark off different parts of your diagram.

Do not put up a visual aid without talking about it; otherwise it will be a distraction, the learners will look at it and not listen to what you are talking about. The eye is stronger than the ear.

There are many advantages of these visual aids. They can be prepared carefully before the talk. They can be used more than once. They can be used in villages or other centres without other equipment. They can be understood by illiterate people and more easily remembered.

But do not let your visual aid control what you say. They are aids, helps, not rules!

Visual aids can be in other forms. They can be objects, passed round; but remember, by the time last student/learner is handling the object, you will probably be talking about something else. Vary the route the object takes so that the same person is not always last; and be aware of where it is at any time.

They can be local things (like plants etc), things brought by the learners from the local community, not things brought by the teacher into the community from outside and taken away again at the end of the class. This is important and we should do this as often as we can: for if the learners see these objects around them, this will tend to reinforce the learning. Start to look around you and begin to build up a collection of such objects now.

Start your list of local visual aids here:

Photographs always interest people: but they too need to be passed round. Slides are photographs which all the learners can see at the same time; but slides need equipment (an electricity supply, a projector, a screen, unless there is a clean blank wall, and usually (though not always) darkness) which is not always available. Remember, if you use slides,

a) they must be clearly visible: poor slides or a screen which is too small to see clearly are worse than useless, they will discredit what you are saying

b) do not use too many in any one class session: a few slides, each of them discussed, are better than lots of slides hurriedly put in and out of the machine, only briefly seen and not remembered.

Films are sometimes more difficult to obtain and need more equipment; but they are most useful as they normally (but not always) combine sound and sight, and they appeal to many learners. T.V. programmes, videos may also be used in some circumstances.

Most of these will be made by other persons, and you will have to get them from some source or other. But you can make your own aids - like puppet shows, which are a very popular method of expository teaching.

Audio-aids: cassettes and other tape-recordings, records etc are being used more frequently; but unless it is music, groups of student/learners do not listen to tapes for long and they remember even less than with a lecture. To learn, it seems that most student/learners need to see the speaker, to watch their face as well as listen to their voice.

In every case when you use an aid, do not just ask your student/learners to watch or listen; ask them what they think about the aid itself.

II The demonstration:

This is (after the talk) the most widely used method of extension teaching. The teacher/instructor shows the learner how to do something.

Demonstrations need not only to be carefully prepared but also rehearsed. Do not worry if things go wrong - they are bound to go wrong sometime. One characteristic of the good teacher is that they can cope when things go wrong, not get it right all the time! But try your hardest to reduce these occasions to the minimum by preparing and practising thoroughly. Have your materials, your equipment and the message all ready.

Make sure all the learners can see the demonstration. Do not go too fast. Break the subject down into simple steps and take each one slowly.

Never do anything without asking the learners to do it after you; too many demonstrations just show the action without giving all the learners any opportunity to do it for themselves. When you ask the learners to imitate your actions, do it step by step, not the whole process all at once - for example, not to cook a whole meal but to take one or two of the steps towards it. Make sure that they too have the equipment and the materials - build up their confidence that they can do it. But to do that, we must believe that they can do it for themselves.

Demonstrations, like the lecture/talk, can use aids - games, tools etc - which we can make for ourselves. Sometimes we can ask the learners to collect or even make aids for us - but that leads to the next section.

Are there any topics you have talked to your class about which could have been better displayed by a demonstration? List these items here:

CHAPTER 4

EXPLORATORY METHODS

We do not need to tell or show our student/learners everything; they can find out for themselves, even the illiterate learners, and they must always be given the opportunity to experiment for themselves. This section discusses some of the methods you can use with the learners.

As with Expository Methods, there are two main kinds of exploratory methods, those aimed at finding out things and those aimed at practising things.

I Discovery Methods:

Reading:

The most common way in which our (literate) student/learners can acquire new knowledge and understanding without listening to us is by reading.

They can read books and articles, newspapers and journals etc
They can read what they choose or what we give them
They can read alone or in groups
They can simply read or take notes on what they read

One big advantage of reading as a learning method is that the learners can do it at their own level, at their own pace (speed) and when they are free, not just in class. But reading is a skill, and we may need to have to build up their confidence by practising it in class as well.

We ought not leave them entirely without our support but try to test how much they understand what they read. Never set a piece of reading without following it up in some way or other.

Our learners can read what is already printed or what we have prepared for them. If we write something for them to read, we can include exercises or questions for them to complete to see if they understand what they are reading. We should adapt what we write to their abilities - for example, the words we use and our paragraphs should on the whole be short. Some diagrams and pictures will help to make the reading task easier and more pleasant.

We can even go further than this: we can write something, then in the text ask a question to which the student/learners can write an answer. We can provide some indication of the correct answer so that they can then test their answers for themselves: if they get it right, they can proceed to the next piece of reading material, given on a certain page; but if they get the answer wrong, they can go over the material again. This form of 'programmed learning' will take you a good deal of time to prepare and you will need to test it out first in order to get it right, but it is a very effective method of teaching adults in our extension classes - and it is not too difficult for us as teachers to do on a small scale.

But this may well be beyond the abilities of those who attend our extension classes. Nevertheless we should ask ourselves when was the last time we provided any reading matter at all for those in our classes who can read, and whether it came from material which we wrote specially for them or from books, newspapers or journals to which we have access; and we need to ask ourselves whether it is entirely impossible for those we teach in rural villages or in urban areas to find reading material which they want us to help them with. After all, one of the aims of our programmes is to encourage those who can read to read more, and in this process we can help by providing more material.

Projects:

A project is a task set to the learners which will involve them working (that is, reading, enquiring, collecting information or making something) on their own.

There are several stages here:

a) set the task very clearly so that they see it. Make sure they understand what they are being asked to do. It is often a good idea to put it in the form of a question to answer or something to make. The task may be set by yourself or by the student/learners for themselves. Make sure that they agree to undertake this task willingly; and run through it first with them - never ask your student/learners to do something without making sure that they know how to do it.

b) they collect the materials. It may be the things needed to make the object they have agreed to make or it may be the data needed to answer the question posed. In the latter case, they may read books, journals or newspapers, or they may ask other people or visit places and so on. They may need to be able to read and write notes, but there are other things they can do as well, which even illiterate persons can do - for example,

(i) talk to people and even record people's opinions and information and memories: cassette recorders and tapes are widely available now and can be used by illiterate as well as literate persons;

(ii) listen to radio programmes or perhaps watch television or go to see films and report on them;

(iii) collect items from their homes or from the area around;

and so on. Our task is to see that they make sense of these activities and to direct them towards fulfilling the objective of the course (for example, to study the role of women as portrayed in radio plays, television or films, etc)

c) they process the materials which they have collected. They may make an object, prepare a meal, put together a report or in some other way sort out the material, then choose the parts they want, put them together, arrange them in some sort of order or sequence, use them to answer the question posed.

d) they present it to the teacher and/or the other learners and/or the local community. They can (if they are literate) write a brief paper, prepare an exhibition (illiterate persons can do this: they often have excellent visual sense), make a play etc. Some adult extension projects have had permanent results such as a publication or the creation of a local museum for example, and much community development is based on large projects undertaken by local groups. But we do not always need to work on this scale in our extension classes, our projects will normally be much smaller, practical pieces of work by which the student/learners will learn something.

Learning projects are usually individual pieces of work; group projects are harder to manage and you cannot be sure that all the members of the group have been learning.

The advantage of the project is that it not only adds to the learner's knowledge and skills directly; the learner also practices the skills of learning (finding out, reading, writing, etc); it motivates the learners and builds up their confidence; and it means that the learners can carry on with projects when our course has come to an end.

List some of the projects your student/learners have completed. Are there others they could do?

Done	*To do*

Case study:

This is a particular form of project. The learners on their own or in small groups can take a particular case and study it for themselves. You must choose your case studies very carefully. And it is important to draw out from it the general rules and principles which will apply. In a women's studies programme, for example, each of the learners can take a case study, but when they are all brought together, a general picture of the role and status of women, the barriers they face to living a full life and what they can do to change their role and status, needs to be drawn out from the individual case studies.

Make a short list of some case-studies your student/learners could do during your course:

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Surveys:
Another project could be to conduct a survey. This can be very simple (how many children there are in each family in the local community, for instance, and how many go to school, or how many of a certain type of tree or plant grow in the area) or more complex, even perhaps a full census-type survey or a study of all the tress and animal life in the region. Once again the subject must be carefully chosen, preferably by the learners themselves, and the teacher should go over the ground thoroughly beforehand. but it is not necessary to engage in such elaborate surveys: every extension class could draw from the adult learners what they already know, and that is a form of survey.

What sort of surveys could your student/learners do during your course? List some of them here:

Visits:
Visits are a useful form of extension teaching which we do not use nearly often enough.

The site and time of the visit needs to be selected carefully, preferably with the learners themselves. The group should be prepared for the visit; if possible, we could get them to prepare before they go a list of things they are going to look out for.

Always follow up the visit by group discussion. Perhaps some or all of them could write an account of the visit. Make sure these accounts are not just descriptive but that they also say what the student/learners felt about what they saw.

Are there any local visits your student/learners can make with or without you? List some of them here:

II Experimental Methods

Learners need to use their new knowledge and skills, to 'play' with them, to practice and improve them.

Practice:

After a demonstration, all the learners should be asked to do all or some of the tasks they have seen demonstrated for themselves, and to do them more than once. We are not just concerned to see that the learners in our extension classes can do the tasks, but that they do do them and that they continue to perform them and can repeat them with success time and again. So we need to provide opportunities for our learners to practice in all of our courses.

We have to decide first

* how quickly we want the task to be done;
* how well we want the task to be done;
* and under what conditions we want the task to be done

For instance, if our task is literacy, we will want the learners to read something at a particular level, not just a very simple sentence (it is often a good idea to get the learners to decide what they want to read by the end of the course), to read with fluency, not hesitantly; with understanding, not like a robot; and so on.

If our task is sewing, we will want the learners to sew at a 'normal' speed, not very slowly, to sew well (evenly, not too tightly or too loosely etc) and to sew particular stitches, not just one stitch.

Our job as teachers is to set the tasks, make sure the materials are available, and provide the encouragement the learners will need. We don't need to provide discouragement - the learners can find plenty of that all round them: we need to help them on.

Can you list some of the learning tasks you have asked your learners to do?

in class	*out of class*

Sometimes we will find some learners can do the tasks easily but others will have more difficulty. How can we keep the group fully occupied? One way is to ask the more advanced students to help the slower learners. Another is to break the full group up into smaller groups. As we experiment with our classes, as we grow more experienced and confident, we will be able to cope better with problems like this.

If one of the student/learners cannot do the task, break the task up into smaller tasks until they <u>can</u> do one of them; then build on success to get to the next task. Don't just ask them to go on repeating their failure! Do not let them practice bad habits, only good ones.

Take one of the learning tasks you have listed above and break it up into smaller learning tasks to be given to your student/learners.

To help them practice - which means not just to do the same task over and over again but to do the same task in several different ways - we can construct special aids and games for them to use.

Trial and error:

Sometimes we need to allow the learners to experiment on their own, to try things out in different ways, to see what works and what doesn't. And don't be worried when they get it wrong! 'Play' is all part of learning. We are often too concerned that our learners should be 'right' all the time.

Problem solving:

We can also set problems for our learners to solve on their own or in groups. This will call on all their knowledge and all their skills so they will see how to use them and they may well come to want to learn more.

The problems we set should be real problems, not artificial ones. Frequently the learners can select the subjects of the problems, or incidents from their own lives can be taken and the class be asked to determine how they should be handled.

Activities:

Eventually the members of our class/group can join together into an activity which will use all their combined experience, knowledge and skills and which will encourage them to go out and learn more.

Some such activities which extension groups can do and have done with the help of a leader like yourself are:

a) creative writing: writing their own thoughts and feelings to share with each other, sometimes in prose, sometimes in poetry

b) running a community newspaper, with columns on health, on farming, on local history, on politics, on the neighbourhood environment, on community matters etc

c) running a youth centre, child care group, community centre etc

d) setting up a co-operative; developing an income-generating programme of their own

There are many other forms such activities have taken. Some groups have written a book about their local community, some have put up an exhibition, some have made a film or radio programme.

List one possible major activity your extension class could do as a whole:

But such activities are a long way down the line: nevertheless they are the possible end product if we begin to use 'exploratory methods' in our classes, if we encourage our student/learners to find out for themselves and to practice their new skills, knowledge and understandings.

And such activities are key methods for learning. For in the end, we only learn in one of two ways. We learn by doing: we learn to make a piece of furniture by making furniture; we learn health by practising it; we learn to farm by farming, to drive by driving.

Or we learn by teaching: we learn by telling others, by helping others to learn.

And our student/learners will learn best if they can do both of these

- if they can practice what they are learning

- and if they can help others to learn as well.

We the teachers should encourage our student/learners to become teachers of others.

CHAPTER 5

PARTICIPATORY METHODS

So far we have seen that our student/learners may learn when we teach them: or they may learn when they explore or practice themselves. There is a third group of methods, those where the learners act together to learn.

Group discussion:

The most common form of teaching method in extension, after the lecture/talk and demonstration, is the group discussion. The teacher does not always need to be the chairman for this, but it is best if the teacher keeps an eye on how it proceeds.

The discussion needs to be clearly focussed if it is to be useful; otherwise, it will just wander along and get nowhere. Try to find a question to answer or some sense of agreement to be arrived at ("Is dowry wrong?", for example), not just an airing of views. The student/learners are usually very good at choosing the subject area but the instructor may need to focus it more clearly - not just environmental sanitation in general but "what shall we do with used washing water?" for example.

List two or three on the topics of discussion in your last two classes: were they narrowly focussed (mark with N) or more general (mark with G)?

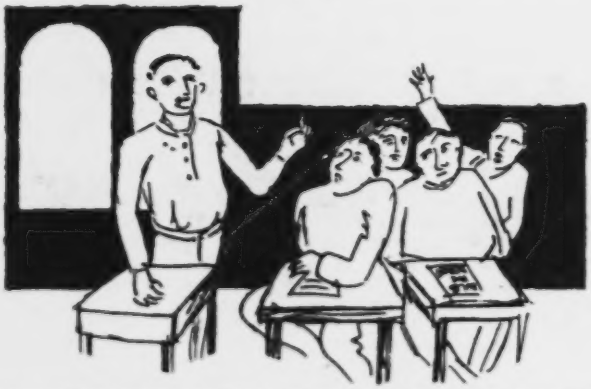
There are many problems here, and we cannot deal with all of them. There is the group member who talks all the time, stopping others from joining in, and the other member who says nothing. There are the two or three who form a sub-group. There is the person who always brings in the same point, even when it is irrelevant. What are we to do about these?

There are two possible answers: to bring in "rules for the game", or to break up the group.

Debate:

The most usual way to bring in "rules for the game" is to structure a formal debate. Most of us know the rules - a controversial topic is chosen, one person speaks on one side for a set time; one speaks on the other side for the same length of time. Then others can speak (usually each for a shorter time), some on one side, some on the other. In the end two speakers sum up, one on one side, the other on the other side. Finally a vote is taken on the issue. The whole procedure is controlled by a chairman who is neutral.

Debates are really a game played by rules. They are very useful in areas where attitudes are important - health, for instance, and family planning. They are less useful in skill training.



List three topics for debate relevant to your course:

1.

2.

3.

Sub-groups:

The other way to overcome some of the problems of group discussion is to break the group up into smaller discussion groups. We can make them so small that everyone must talk, not just the 'expert'.

Sometimes we can let the members choose who they want to work with; at other times, we should choose to stop small cliques from forming.

The task needs to be set clearly, and a time limit given. Then each group can report back to the whole group the 'findings', again with a strict time limit imposed - to summarise in no more than two or three minutes a discussion in the small group lasting twenty minutes is a difficult task which will call for a great deal of new learning. We should ask each sub-group for just the most important two or three points, not for the whole of the discussion.

Play about with sub-groups - they are fun. Here are a few ideas:

Buzz groups: you have come to a new point in your talk; the listeners have been quiet for a long time - it will be good to get them active for a time. Ask a question, then ask everyone to discuss it with one of their neighbours for about two minutes. There will be (or should be) a buzz around the room. At the end of the time set, the class comes together again.

Snowball: suppose you want them to see that there are several items in a list. Ask each of the learners to think up one such item; then ask them to join with their neighbour to see if they have two items between them, then these two can join with the next couple to combine their lists. These four in turn can link with the next foursome, and so on until you are back with the whole group. Then see how many items the learners have come up with amongst themselves (most of the small groups will have some of the same items, so in most cases you won't end up with more than four or five items). It may take time - but everyone will have had some fun - and it is important that our classes should be enjoyable. And we shall have made it clear that we take seriously what the learners already know - that they can contribute to the work of the class. And in doing so, each of the participants will have learned something.

Introductions: divide the group up into twos and set them a question to answer, a problem to solve. A asks B what he/she thinks, then B asks A. Then they split up and form new groups of twos; and A tells C what B thinks, and B tells D what A thinks. Again, the student/learners will learn to listen to others, to understand someone else's point of view - and they will learn to talk.

'Teachers': after a demonstration, divide the class up into threes. In each of the sub-groups, A then teaches B the subject and C watches. At the end, C says whether A got everything right or not; if not, then C teaches A and B watches. The instructor goes round, watching as carefully as possible.

And so we could go on. There are other kinds of groups and sub-groups such as

- the 'seminar' where everyone prepares the same topic; one of the learners starts off the discussion and then the others join in;

- the 'tutorial' where one of the learners writes something and reads it to the others

- the 'syndicate' where small groups join together to solve a problem.

And if we like, we can devise our own.

Are there any topics from your last two classes which the student/learners could have discussed amongst themselves in small groups? List them here:

Two main types of group activity are 'role-play' and 'simulation'.

Role play:

In this, members of the group either singly or in smaller groups adopt and maintain a role. Thus in a session on dowry, some members could be the father, the mother, the bridegroom, the bride, the money-lender, the in-laws, the rest of the community etc. Each would argue their own case. In health courses, some could represent the sick, some the healthy, some the 'modern' practices, some the 'traditional'.

The learners are often very good at this. They often choose the subject and the roles to be played, and their observation of what actually goes on is often much more keen than ours. Roles can be played in groups. For example, during a session on child labour, one group could be 'children', another group be 'mothers', another 'fathers', another the 'school teacher', another the 'government' etc.

It is useful after a time to get members of the various groups to change their roles so that they can learn other roles and do not identify too strongly with one point of view. And there will need to come a time when the role play ends and the whole group discusses what they have learned from the exercise - it is important to do this and not to end the session with the role play alone.

Simulation:

This is slightly different. Here we try to build up in the group a real situation with persons taking real parts.

Sometimes it is not just a presentation but a problem-solving situation. For example, a craft co-operative has just been told that it cannot get any more reeds for making baskets. What will it do? The group is constituted as the members of the co-operative and the issue is discussed as a real problem until it is solved and a plan of action is decided upon.

Simulation seeks to discover what attitudes the learners have and how they will react in a given situation; while role play seeks to discover how far the learners can understand the feelings of another. Both are valuable tools for attitudinal learning.

Drama:

Somewhat more developed is the 'play'. Here the group will determine a theme, construct a play about it and rehearse it until they are ready to perform it before some outside audience.

You may find it helpful to list a few possible topics in your subject area for -

simulation:

role-play:

drama:

CHAPTER 7

TEACHING METHODS IN EVALUATION

After any teaching session, we usually set out to see if our student/learners have learned anything. The methods we use for this can in themselves become methods of teaching and learning.

Questions:

One method of finding out whether our learners have been learning is for the teacher to ask questions.

The art of asking proper questions needs to be practised - it does not always come easily.

We can ask a general question (to the whole class) or a directed question (to an individual); it is a good idea to mix the two kinds of questions, not to stick to one kind only.

We can ask a closed question (one with a 'yes' or 'no' answer), a specific question (to which there is one right answer) or an open question (to which there is no right answer: for example, "what do you think about ...?"). Again it would be well to use several of each of the different kinds of questions, not all of one sort.

It is never a good idea to ask the learners to guess the answer. Guessing is not normally bad - we do it all the time. But the learners should have some reason for their answer. It may be based on their experience, what they already know; or it may be based on what they have just learned.

Nor is it a good thing to ask them to decide what is in our mind. For example, if we ask them a question to which there are several answers (such as the name of a country beginning with the letter P) and they give one of these possible answers ("Peru", say), we should not say that that answer is not the correct one because it is not the one we wanted for all sorts of other reasons. We must try to define more closely exactly what answer we are seeking.

One useful way of proceeding is to offer a series of answers and to ask the learners to indicate the correct answer; but if we do that, we must be ready to show the learners why the other responses are incorrect or inadequate.

Tests:

A test is a useful method of evaluating learning; and it can in its turn lead on to further learning. But it is an advanced form of learning skill, and should not be used with adult learners who are unused to the more formal programmes of schooling.

Most of the tests we prepare for adults are devised on the basis of tests offered to children. This is inappropriate to adults. With adults we are less interested in what they can remember - their memories are usually less strong than younger people except in certain areas where they use the material a great deal or where it is particularly relevant to their everyday life. It is therefore not helpful to adults to jump around from one topic to another when offering tests; follow a sequence and put all the questions on one topic close together.

We are more concerned to test what they know and how they can use this new knowledge, these new skills, in their everyday life. The tests we formulate for our adult learners should then be drawn from life; they should be practical, not theoretical (not just paper learning); and they should attempt to relate one part of the learning material to another.

If we are able to do all of this, we shall have devised a tool of learning, a new method, for the learners will be practising their newly acquired skills, using their newly acquired knowledge and understandings to tackle new problems, and this will lead to new learning.

Quizzes:

These are more useful as a motivational tool and as a form of reward to reinforce the new knowledge and understanding. They tend to stress the view that learning consists of mastering lots of facts, not ideas or attitudes; they tend to suggest that one person is right and all the others are wrong; and they often reward the wrong things. But they can be fun, and some student/learners (usually the successful ones) like them because they are competitive. And they too can be a useful means of reinforcing learning on some occasions. But do not use them too often.

Exercises:
We can set exercises, especially practical ones, for the student/learners in our classes to complete. On the whole these will be practical exercises, designed to see if the learners can do what they claim they have learned.

It may be necessary for us to provide the equipment and materials for these exercises, and then to require them to do or to make something. But a rather better way is to devise a situation, as real as we can make it, and to put the student/learners in this and to ask them what they would do - this is a truer exercise of the newly acquired abilities.

Self-assessment:
In the end, the learners must come to judge for themselves whether they are right or wrong. whether they are performing well or not. When they see a garment, they must decide whether it is good enough; when they clean up their home, they must decide if they have cleaned it well enough for their own purposes.

We must therefore encourage them to judge for themselves rather than rely on our judgment of their work. it is always a good idea for us to ask them how they feel about a piece of work before we give them our own assessment; and we should also ask them to say how they would make the article or do the exercise better next time. If we follow this self-assessment up with another exercise, an opportunity to try again, another chance to do the work again, to practice the skill or to use the new knowledge again, then we shall have built a powerful learning exercise.

When did I last test my student/learners?

What methods did I use -
Questions in class?
A test?
A quiz?
An exercise?
Self-assessment?

If I have used more than one method, which do I think are the best methods?

CHAPTER 8

THE FINAL WORD

There are lots of things we can do, in class and out of class, to encourage and help our student/learners to learn. We must not use one method only: we must use lots of methods and vary them all the time.

There are two key words in this study - to plan and to prepare:

Plan: as teachers/instructors in extension, we need to plan our lessons and class sessions. We need to know in advance not only what we are going to teach (that is often given to us in the manual) but also what teaching methods we are going to use. We now know that it is necessary to mix these methods - that a balance between expository ('telling') methods, exploratory ('finding out') methods, participatory ('joining in') methods and evaluative ('testing') methods is needed in every class session that we take. We must choose well in advance what methods we are going to use on this occasion. And this means that we must spend time planning our classes.

Preparing: most of the methods above will need some kind of materials, and we need to spend time preparing these. Sometimes we shall not be able to get hold of all the material we shall need for one or other method; in that case we can change over to another method - there are plenty to choose from! But it is essential that we turn up at our classes well prepared, with everything we need to hand; that is the best help we can give to our student/learners to encourage them to learn.

But in many ways the most important thing is that we shall want our student/learners to carry on learning systematically and purposefully when our course is over.

Therefore, we ought in our classes to

a) help them to be active learners, not passive learners - to take the initiative, to be curious, to explore and discover and join with others - and not to rely on us as teachers

b) and secondly help them learn how to learn - how to find out things (not just what but how), how to make notes and keep records, how to make decisions, how to solve problems, how to arrange subjects for themselves.

So the learners in our extension classes should be encouraged to join in the learning process. As teachers, we usually do too much for our student/learners. If we encourage them to join with us in choosing what to learn, when and where to learn, how to learn (the methods to be used) and in testing whether learning has taken place, then in the end we can walk away and they can carry on learning without us.

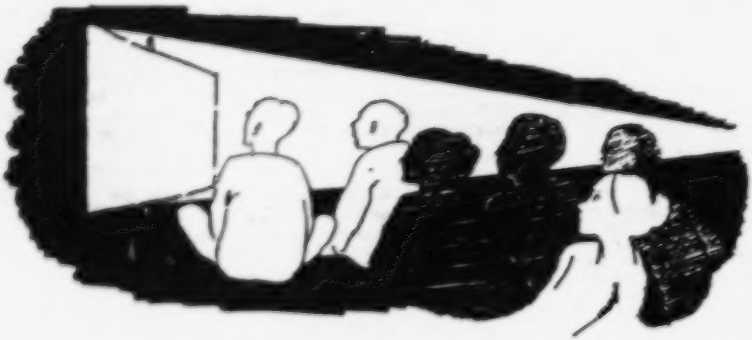
When did I last discuss with my student/learners:

what they wanted to learn?

when and where they wanted to learn?

what methods we should use?

how well they thought they were doing?



TEACHING METHODS IN EXTENSION

This is one of a series of booklets prepared specially for extension workers and others engaged in development programmes who find themselves teaching adults; but it will also be of interest to others who are involved in the education and training of adults at a practical level. It takes the reader simply through the range of teaching methods available without a lot of equipment, and stresses that there are many different forms of methods for us to choose from. It is essential reading for all those who wish to be effective in their programmes.

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Other titles in this series:

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